

The THOREAU SOCIETY

BULLETIN

The Thoreau Society, Inc. is an informal gathering of students and followers of Henry David Thoreau. Herbert H. Uhlig, Winchester, Mass., President; Mrs. Chas. MacPherson, Acton Mass., vice-president; and Walter Harding, State Univ., Geneseo, N.Y., 14454 Secretary-Treasurer. Annual membership \$2.00; life membership, \$50.00. Address communications to the secretary.

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ON LETTING THINGS ALONE by Frederick T. McGill, Jr.
(The 1973 Presidential Address).

From my first acquaintance with WALDEN, I have been attracted, intrigued, and puzzled by Thoreau's doctrine of the simple life. The related idea that each of us should gnaw his own bone seems to me clear enough, and I have tried for years to mind my own business and exclude from my attention whatever seemed irrelevant or unrewarding. My profession has granted me time to think, and occasional hours of solitude. But the good life for me has not been a simple life.

Several years ago I was talking to a Unitarian group in Poughkeepsie about Thoreau, and as I quoted the passage in Walden about keeping your accounts on your thumbnail, I suddenly recalled that half the men in the audience were employed by International Business Machines. I wondered privately whether after all the simplicity bit might be just a delightful anachronism in the 20th Century. On the subjects of values and priorities, however, Henry David seemed to me as refreshing and as pertinent as ever.

Some of these concerns were on my mind a couple of months ago when I sat down in my black leather chair to think about what I should say to you today. As a starter, I began to play mentally with a familiar quotation from WALDEN: "A man is rich in proportion to the number of things which he can afford to let alone." Had this worked for me? Certainly I had made careful choices, and with increasing leisure I had chosen to do this instead of that, and I had purchased that instead of this. But my days had been filled with activity, and my house crowded with material goods. Could I attribute my contentment to having let things alone? What would a truly simple life include and exclude?

Just then the incredible occurred. I don't expect you to believe it, but I shall tell you anyway. And first I must explain that Short Hills, New Jersey, where I live, is a well manicured suburb, kept that way by Lawn King and Lawn-o-Mat. It is above all kempt. In Short Hills only the very young wear baggy pants and beards. Therefore, when I responded to a knock at my door, and I was confronted by Henry David Thoreau, looking just as you would expect him to look, I was taken, as they say aback. Those great round eyes glowed out of the shadow of his broad-brimmed hat. Although it was dusk, I could still see on his trousers what I took to be traces of Concord mud.

"Is your name McGill?" he asked.

"It is," I said, "and you don't need to introduce yourself. No one could be more welcome at this moment."

As I took his hat, I noticed three or four blossoms of the May apple peering from the sweatband.

"Come into the library," I said, "and tell me why you have honored me by this visit."

I pointed him into the black leather chair--not so much because it was comfortable as because it faced a wall of books, most of them by or about Henry David Thoreau.

"McGill," he said, "I have heard that you preside over an organization designed to keep my reputation alive."

"That's not exactly our purpose, Mr. Thoreau; we don't for an instant think your reputation needs--" But he cut me off.

"I came here tonight because I understood you found my writings unclear. I thought I might help with a footnote or two of comment," As he turned his eyes toward my cluttered mantelpiece, I remembered the treasure he had discarded from his own shelf because it would require dusting. "I see you have some things," he commented.

While I stuttered some inane reply, he raised his hand. "I was always tempted by them too," he said. "Just don't let them get into the saddle and ride you, as one of my old friends used to say."

"I am grateful to you for coming," I assured him. "But how did you get here?--from wherever you were."

"I move about freely enough on this kind of errand," he answered. "I spend most of my time in the Celestial Pastures picking huckleberries. But I needed a little change of occupation. Even the simple life can be over-simplified. Tell me what's on your mind."

"It's this very matter of living simply," I said, "and whether it can really be done in the 20th Century. But of course without knowing the complexities of our culture, you can hardly be expected to speak to our special situation."

"McGill," he said, "I may not be as ignorant as you suppose. I have color TV in my present cabin. This is not an idle luxury; I regard it as a necessity for any philosopher who would keep one eye on the world of phenomena. Of course," he added, "I am very selective in my operation of the dials."

"Since you are so well informed," I said, "I don't need to describe to you the multitude of inventions that we enjoy designed to save time. Compare the electric washing machine, for example, to the old-fashioned tub and washboard. Compare the vacuum cleaner to the carpet beater and the broom. Or the gas range to the wood stove. Wouldn't you agree that they work toward the simplification of life?"

"I have a question or two of my own," he answered. "First, what does it cost the housewife or her husband to buy these improvements?"

"More than a little," I replied. "But you will recall having remarked that the cost of a thing is the

amount of life that must be expended for it, immediately or in the long run. You must have had some premonition of our modern credit system, which has far outdistanced the simple mortgages of your day. We generally pay for everything today 'in the long run,' which makes the initial outlay far less painful, and in fact makes the whole transaction a rather beautiful expression of faith on the part of all those involved."

"I am curious about another matter," Thoreau said. "What do you, both men and women, do with the time you have saved?"

"A good question," I answered, "and not an unexpected one. I recall that you wondered about the ultimate advantages of traveling thirty miles an hour. Not all of us who save time use that precious commodity quite as you used yours. Some of us, for example, like to go to meetings, even attend church, and thanks to our time-saving devices our contacts with our fellows are more frequent. Others of us, as you did, enjoy the out-of-doors. I suppose that before the Fitchburg Railroad was operating, it would have taken you most of an afternoon to drive to Long Wharf for a whiff of sea air. My neighbors, zooming along the Garden State Parkway, make it all the way to the New Jersey seashore and back again in an afternoon,--though I confess our sea air gives less rewarding whiffs. Speaking personally, I often enjoy just sitting and thinking, as you chose to do now and then."

"What do you think about?" asked Thoreau.

I just smiled and shrugged, feeling he was prodding overmuch. I then steered the conversation a few degrees to one side. At this point a demon within me placed my tongue in my cheek--even though that made articulation rather awkward.

"Mr. Thoreau," I said, "that was a great idea of yours--getting rich by letting things alone. Naturally, the less you buy the more you can put in the bank. Today, as you must have heard, the savings banks are offering valuable premiums for new accounts. Perhaps," I added facetiously, "with \$100 to invest you might get a new quart measure for use in picking huckleberries."

"I could use the gift," said Thoreau, a little wistfully, "but I doubt that I'd have anything to deposit even if I were back in Concord."

"We really need your ideas to combat the super-salesmanship of this century," I said. "You surely have noted how methods have changed since your friend Alcott offered his merchandise from door to door. I guess you could call it 'pedlar's progress.'" This last was my private joke, as I was sure he had never heard of Odell Shepard. "Today all the media combine to sell you a \$5000 car when one for \$2000 will do as well," I said. "But the wise man, who listens to you, knows enough to let the luxury car alone. He can then buy a \$3000 savings certificate offering him 6% interest which by the magic of continuous compounding pays at the effective rate of 6.27." I smiled. I knew I was perverting his meaning, but I thought he knew I knew it.

"My friend," he said, shaking his head, "you miss my whole point as to letting things alone. With this talk about frugality and savings, you sound as if you thought I was Benjamin Franklin. I want you to listen to me carefully and get this straight. I did not say you can get rich by letting things alone. I said a man is rich in proportion to the number of things which he can afford to let alone. That word afford is the key. Do you understand?"

"I think so," I said. "I may not be as stupid

as I have sounded."

"Interesting word, afford," he continued. "You can afford something only if you have resources to cushion the shock of your sacrifice. You can afford a car only if you have enough resources to provide food and clothes and shelter in addition. You can afford letting things alone only if you have inner resources that will keep your life from seeming empty."

"You are saying then that you have to be rich already in order to let things alone?"

"That's what I'm saying--using 'rich' in my own way, of course. But I should add that the more you can let things alone, the richer you will become. 'To him who hath,' and all that."

"Mr. Thoreau," I said, "it sounds to me as if you were conceiving an elite class of philosophers as the only ones eligible for your 'simple' life. Who but a philosopher would be happy just sitting around all day on his resources?"

"No one," he answered gravely. "No one but a philosopher." He pointed to the bottom shelf of my bookcase, where the two bulky volumes of his journal in the Dover Press edition towered above the little books. "Do you remember what I wrote on September 1, 1853 about the savage and the philosopher?" he asked.

Evading a direct answer, I told him I had studied his journal from beginning to end.

"My observations at that time related to this subject," said Thoreau. "I was commenting on a report that the missionaries at the Hawaiian Islands found the contentment of the natives a hindrance to their conversion. All the natives desired in a day was two cents' worth of fish and poi. I remarked that the real obstacle was not their style of living but their limited views as to the object of living. If I may I will quote myself for a minute or two. I said:

The savage lives simply through ignorance and idleness or laziness, but the philosopher lives simply through wisdom. In the case of the savage, the accompaniment of simplicity is idleness with its attendant vices, but in the case of the philosopher, it is the highest employment and development. The fact for the savage, and for the mass of mankind, is that it is better to plant, weave, and build than do nothing or worse; but the fact for the philosopher, or a nation loving wisdom, is that it is most important to cultivate the highest faculties and spend as little time as possible in planting, weaving, and building, etc. It depends upon the height of your standard, and no doubt through manual labor as a police, men are educated up to a certain level. The simple style is bad for the savage because he does worse than to obtain the luxuries of life; it is good for the philosopher because he does better than to work for them. The question is whether you can bear freedom. At present the vast majority of men, whether black or white, require the discipline of labor which enslaves them for their good. If the Irishman did not shovel all day, he would get drunk and quarrel. But the philosopher does not require the same discipline; if he shovelled all day, we should receive no elevating suggestions from him.

He stopped and fixed his eyes on me.

"You drew a sharp contrast there," I said, after a pause--"and in your characteristically aphoristic manner. But in two respects it sounded to me--if you will excuse the expression--rather un-American."

"This certainly isn't an exclusively American

problem, if that is what you mean."

"No, Mr. Thoreau. I refer in part to your characterization of the Irish, which many of us today would have to regard as an ethnic slur. But I know that you meant nothing invidious. More important is your implication that we are not all created equal. It is almost like the Calvinism of your ancestors: the philosophers are the Elect, and the savages and all who require the discipline of labor are doomed either to slavery or to misery in their idleness. You are not necessarily denying them the simple life, but you are condemning the idle ones to suffer it while the philosophers enjoy it. It just isn't democratic."

"McGill," he said, "I did not make the world. I only report what I observe. So far as I can see, everyone has freedom of the will. While none of us can have everything he may desire, all of us can choose what to let alone. No one gives up anything he really wants, and if at any time he feels his life is empty, he will let the trivia come trickling in. Only the philosopher will choose asceticism."

"Mr. Thoreau," I said, "You must be aware from your TV viewing that we are faced today with a crisis of leisure. We have more free time than we have learned to handle. I agree that some people can avoid sin or boredom only by laboring. Most of them, also, to keep their sanity, must move in crowds, whether they are working or playing. Solitude overwhelms them. They are afraid of themselves, so they call in others as bodyguards; and, as you say, the trivia come trickling in to fill their empty days."

Thoreau stood up. "Yes, you have a problem," he said. "It is the same old nut I tried to crack, but the shell is tougher now than ever. It is time for me to go. I don't travel in a pumpkin coach, but the schedule is similar. Tell them up in Concord that they need more philosophers."

"Mr. Thoreau," I said, "wait a minute. You go for overstatement, and for what we call polarization, for positive and negative extremes. You will remember you spoke in your journal about your tendency to exaggerate. You don't really for one instant think that everyone is either all-savage or all-philosopher."

"Of course not," he said, accepting his hat. "I was making a point, which I hope you understood. Actually, if you will read my chapter 'Higher Laws' in WALDEN, you will note that I found in myself instincts toward both the spiritual life and the savage life, and I said I revered them both."

"I will tell you something else about yourself," I said, "if you will pardon my boldness. You not only shared these diverse human instincts, but for a philosopher you were very much addicted to things of this earth. As you just said, no one gives up anything he really wants, and fortunately for us there were many things you could not afford to let alone. Your spy-glass, your bird book, your botany book, your BHAGAVAD-GITA, your boat, your compass, your pens and your notebooks--to name a few. As a philosopher you did not sit on the top of a column or in a monastic cell; you were a peripatetic philosopher. You could not give up your tramping or your sailing, your scribbling or even your lecturing. You could not give up your love of children and of leading them into your world of birdsong and huckleberries. Perhaps a philosopher is one who cannot afford to let alone anything that helps him along the path of wisdom."

"You are twisting my words, but I think you are

beginning to catch my meaning," he answered.

I stood between him and the door, and put my hand on the door-knob. "Before I let you go," I said, "give me a little encouragement. If there is, as I think we have agreed, a fraction of a philosopher--even the seed of a philosopher--in every man and woman, can't we hope eventually to cultivate a multitude of part-time Thoreaus? Disciples who might--as we say--consider their priorities for an hour a day, or even for five minutes here and there throughout the day, just to develop their resources? If the idea should spread, perhaps with the assistance of the media, couldn't we look for a preponderance of philosophical savages? Though I doubt it would do much for the Gross National Product."

For the first time I saw a twinkle in those great round eyes. His lips actually parted in a smile. "I have said that everyone has the freedom to let things alone," he said. "All that is needed is the desire. I do not want disciples, but I should welcome the developments that you suggest. If you should sponsor a spiritual Walden in every person's life, you would have my blessing. I shall watch with interest from my Pastures."

I opened the door. "Thank you for stopping in so opportunely," I said. "One last request. May I call you Henry? I always do--in your absence. After all, you are only 44 and I am nearly 70."

He didn't answer, but he smiled again and gripped my hand. Suddenly he disappeared in the leaning hemlocks on the other side of my driveway.

I went back to the black leather chair and thought about the leisure engendered by the five-day week. I also thought about the four-day week looming on the horizon. I had just begun to figure the number of part-time and full-time philosophers needed to cope--when I fell asleep.

RUTH ROBINSON WHEELER. WH



The Thoreau Society sustained one of its greatest losses with the death on June 3, 1973, of Ruth Robinson (Mrs. Caleb) Wheeler in Concord. Mrs. Wheeler, a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Vassar College, Class of 1912, did graduate work at the University of Munich. After her marriage she lived for many years on the farm that was Thoreau's birthplace on Virginia Road. In recent years she had lived on Fairhaven Bay, spending her winters in Watertown with her sister, Mrs. Warren Wright. In 1930 she wrote with her father a history of her native town of Watertown.

In 1967 she published what has already become accepted as the standard history of Concord, *CONCORD, CLIMATE FOR FREEDOM*. She also wrote numerous articles and pamphlets on various aspects of Concord history. She was a veritable encyclopedia of Concord lore and rare has been the book on any facet of that subject that has not contained grateful acknowledgment from the author for her ever-ready help. I have never written a book, whether it was on Thoreau, Emerson, Alcott or Ellery Channing, without being indebted to her for assistance and I never would have written *THE DAYS OF HENRY THOREAU* had it not been for her gentle but persistent urging and help.

Mrs. Wheeler was one of the founders of The Thoreau Society, its vice-president and a member of the executive committee for many, many years and its sole archivist. I suspect she was the only one who attended every single meeting of the society from its founding in 1941 until her death; and no one was more influential and effective in furthering the work of the society.

She was long active in Concord town affairs, serving both on the school committee and the library board as well as many other committees. In the last several years she spent days and weeks and months pouring over and organizing unsorted papers in the Concord Free Public Library and it was one of her triumphs that only last fall she uncovered there the manuscript of Thoreau's "signing off" from the First Parish. Another of her many contributions was the establishment of the Hapgood Wright Town Forest at Fairyland--brought about when she as a member of the 1935 Concord Tercentenary Committee found that it had unexpended funds and suggested there was no more appropriate way to expend them.

I personally have so many fond memories of Ruth Wheeler that I find it difficult to choose among them--of her giving her annual lecture on Thoreau's neighbors to my Concord Summer Seminars, recreating in our mind's eye the Concord of Thoreau's day and filled with her always witty asides; canoeing with her on Fairhaven Bay and the Sudbury River, an activity she participated in into her eighties; following behind as she marched sturdily up Fairhaven Hill; sitting on her front porch at Fairhaven Bay and listening to her Concord lore; reading long letters from her answering research questions that I could resolve nowhere else; or receiving her pertinent but kindly twitting when she thought I had gone off the deep end on some of my speculations in writing on Thoreau. All Concord and all Thoreauvians who knew her will miss her. For me, Concord will never be the same.

She is survived by three sons, Henry, Robin and Joe and by two sisters, Mrs. Warren Wright and Mrs. Stanley Conant as well as eleven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. She was buried in the family plot in her beloved Sleepy Hollow Cemetery at the foot of Authors' Ridge.

THE 1973 ANNUAL MEETING

The 1973 annual meeting of the Thoreau Society was held on Saturday, July 14, in the First Parish Church in Concord. A coffee hour from 9 to 10 was followed by the business meeting, called to order by President Frederick T. McGill, Jr. Malcolm Ferguson brought the official greetings of the Thoreau Lyceum. The minutes of the 1972 meeting were accepted as published in the Summer, 1972, *BULLETIN*. Walter Harding read the following treasurer's report:

Bal. on Hand as of June 15, 1972	\$3,572.29
Receipts	
Dues	\$1,528.00
Sale of back copies	70.20
Life memberships	100.00
Royalties	86.64
Gifts	27.00
Sale of Luncheon tickets	468.50
	<u>\$2,280.34</u>
	2,280.34
	<u>\$5,852.63</u>
Expenses	
Annual Meeting	\$ 679.18
Postage & Handling	688.87
Printing	538.17
Miscellaneous	322.96
	<u>\$2,229.18</u>
BAL. ON HAND AS OF JUNE 15, 1973	<u>\$3,623.45</u>

Robert Needham announced there is \$1,131 in the Save Walden Fund. He also announced that there was now \$7,440.56 in the Hoover Fund. Marilyn Nicoson read the report of the nominating committee: Herbert H. Uhlig of Winchester, Mass., president; William Howarth of Princeton, N.J., president-elect; Mrs. Charles MacPherson, of Acton, Mass., vice-president; and Walter Harding of Geneseo, N.Y., secretary-treasurer;--all for terms of one year; and Mrs. Edmund Fenn of Concord, Mass. and Kenneth Harris of Slippery Rock, Pa., members of the executive committee for three years. The president announced that Mrs. William H. Moss of the Concord Free Public Library had been appointed archivist of the Thoreau Society by the executive committee. He also announced that the executive committee had established a one thousand dollar fund to be known as the Ruth Robinson Wheeler Fund to be used in the purchase of appropriate rare books and manuscripts for the Thoreau Society Archives as they become available. Purchases are to be authorized by the secretary, with the concurrence of the president (or another officer in the case of his absence). Additional contributions to the fund are invited. A motion to amend the by-laws, made at last year's meeting, was taken from the table and adopted by the society. (The revised and up-dated by-laws are given below.)

Prof. Loren Eiseley of the University of Pennsylvania gave a very moving address on "The Sun and The Eye: Thoreau's Vision of the Natural World" which we are assured will be included in one of his forthcoming books. President McGill followed with "On Letting Things Alone," which is given above. After the luncheon William J. Coffey, secretary-treasurer of the American Institute of Merchant Shipping, on behalf of his institute and of the American Institute of Marine Underwriters presented to the society the nameplate of the SS Henry David Thoreau, a Liberty Ship built in 1942 during World War II to carry supplies in the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans and during the peacetime years used to carry food, clothing, and medical supplies to care for refugees. The plate was accepted by President McGill and by former president Leonard Kleinfeld who after years of effort had arranged for the presentation.

At the afternoon sessions, Mrs. Edmund Fenn conducted a walk to Copan, Rev. Dana McLean Greeley moderated a forum on Thoreau and the Amnesty Issue, and Robert Needham conducted his annual tour of Sleepy Hollow Cemetery. The Thoreau Lyceum were hosts for a sherry party, a box supper, and an exhibition of the photographs of George E. DeWolfe. At the evening session, the NET television film "Henry David Thoreau: The Captain of a Huckleberry

Party." Roland W. Robbins presented a tribute to the late Ruth Robinson Wheeler. The meeting closed with the presentation of the gavel to the new president, Herbert H. Uhlig.

BY-LAWS OF THE THOREAU SOCIETY, INC.

I. The name of this society shall be the Thoreau Society, Inc.

II. The purpose of this society shall be to honor Henry David Thoreau, to stimulate more general interest in his works, to coordinate research in his life and writings, and to act as a repository for Thoreauvians, and in general, to exercise all or any power for which a non-profit corporation organized under the provisions of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for educational and charitable purposes can be authorized or exercised, but not for any other power. No part of the activities of this corporation shall be for the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise of attempting to influence legislation. Notwithstanding anything set forth above, the corporation is constituted only for those purposes and shall exercise only such powers conferred by State law as those allowed under the applicable sections of Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code, as presently in effect or as the same may be amended.

III. The officers of this Society shall consist of a president, a president-elect, a vice-president, a secretary-treasurer, all to be elected for terms of one year, and a board of directors consisting of the four officers as stated, any past president when in attendance at a meeting of the board, and six others to be elected for rotating terms of three years, two of whom are to be elected each year. The election of these officers shall be conducted each year by a nominating committee of three members to be appointed by the president at least three months prior to the annual meeting. All members shall be invited to make nominations. A voting list of all those nominated and willing to serve shall be mailed to all the members at least one month before the date of the annual meeting. The balloting shall take place at the annual meeting and the candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared the duly elected officers of the society. A vacancy in any office shall be filled by the board of directors until the next regular election.

IV. The members of the society shall consist of any persons interested in Thoreau who shall apply for membership and continue to pay their annual dues or subscribe to a life membership in the society. Dues of the society shall be two dollars a year; life membership, fifty dollars.

V. A meeting of the society shall be held each year, on or near Thoreau's birthday, at an hour and place to be designated by the president. Special meetings may be called upon the petition of twelve members and the recommendation of the board of directors. Written notice of all meetings shall be mailed to members of the society. At all meetings of the society, the members present shall be a quorum.

VI. The duties of the officers and directors shall be to supervise the expenditure of the current funds of the society, the care of the repository, the issuing of bulletins, the preparation necessary for all meetings of the society, and in general to forward the purposes of the society.

VII. These by-laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members voting in any election of the society, provided that specific notice of the proposed change be sent to each member of the society.

VIII. In the event of the dissolution of the society, *or Vice-president

its assets shall be assigned to the Concord Free Public Library, Concord, Mass.

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REPORT OF THE WALKING SOCIETY: THE AMERICAN MILE.
by Mary R. Fenn

Concord has growing pains as has every other town, although we try very hard to keep open spaces as much as we can. However, one road known as The American Mile remains substantially as it was in Thoreau's day. In fact if he were to walk down the Lexington Road, as is its real name, he would feel very much at home.

He might set out at the beginning of the road where the Colonial Inn faces the green. The north end of the old inn was indeed his grandparents' home. Glancing to the right, he would perhaps smile as he saw the brick schoolhouse, where an officious school committeeman told him that children must be whipped to learn. Thoreau thereupon chose several youngsters at random, gave them each a switching, then put on his hat and left.

Farther along is the site of the old jail where Thoreau spent the night because he would not pay a poll tax to the state which would condone slavery. On the left he would see the town house and remember his impassioned address there in behalf of John Brown.

Crossing the intersection with the Milldam, the name given to the business district because it once was the milldam, he might pause at the Wright Tavern. In Thoreau's day it was Stacy's store, and he might look today, as he did long ago, at the New Year's gifts

spread out for display in the large window, for it is still a shop which sells gifts.

Just beyond the Tavern is the church green. The meetinghouse in which he was baptized and from which he was buried burned, but the present building is an exact replica.

The old houses along the road were very familiar to him, some of them dating back to the 17th century. One of them was the home of Deacon Reuben Brown, whose auction Thoreau attended for a while, chuckling at the ridiculous sight of the neighbors buying all the trash from the deacon's attic to store in their own until their deaths when it would once more come to light and be sold again.

Beyond on the left is the Dr. Abeil Heywood house. The good doctor, who had been clerk of the church for many years, startled the congregation one Sunday morning when, at the age of 65, he arose and solemnly announced his own marriage banns. Not only that, but he decided that since he was the last man in town to wear knee breeches except for the minister, Ezra Ripley, he would buy a pair of pantaloons for the wedding. He confided to one of the wits in town that he wasn't sure he knew how to put them on, to which his friend replied that he understood they were put on over the head.

As Thoreau went on, he might glance at the hospitable home of Ralph Waldo Emerson on his right, where his feet had led him many a time through the white wooden gate and up the marble walk. The house today is open to visitors, and it is exactly as it was when the Emerson family lived there. And out beyond the garden, several towering pines mark the site of the summerhouse which Thoreau helped Alcott build there.

Thoreau would be pleased as he passed the Benjamin Barron house to remember the industrious slave John Jack, who bought his freedom, and for whom a famous epitaph was inscribed on his gravestone in the Hill Burying Ground.

So the road continues, past the home of John Moore with whose young people Thoreau often went to parties; past the house where Dr. Prescott lived during the Revolution, and who, meeting with Paul Revere as he was stopped on the way to warn Concord that the British were coming, leapt his horse over the wall and brought the alarm to the village; and at last to Orchard House, the home of the Alcotts. Here Thoreau was often a welcomed visitor, and indeed one of the few invited guests at the wedding of the eldest daughter. Next door is the Wayside, home of Nathaniel Hawthorne, also a friend of Thoreau. Both of these houses are open today to visitors.

And so Thoreau might come to the end of the American Mile, though he would probably go beyond the small cottages belonging to the field hands, and the two 17th century Merriam houses, to explore the woods and fields beyond.

It is a comforting thought to know that sections of Thoreau's beloved Concord do remain pretty much as he knew them.

NOTES AND QUERIES

New life members of the Thoreau Society are William Wolf of Heath, Mass., Frederick T. McGill, Jr. of Short Hills, N. J., and Jeffrey H. Michel of Fasanengarten, West Germany. Life membership is fifty dollars.

Robert Baldock of Berkeley, Calif., has recently created a broadside drawing of Thoreau which has been published in an edition limited to 300 copies by the

Druid Press, 1609 Spruce St., Berkeley, Calif., 94709, for \$5.50 postpaid.

Hallmark Cards are selling a 1974 engagement calendar entitled "The World of Thoreau" with many photographs for \$2.00.

According to Bernard L. Turner, president, Walden University, a newly established "Institute for Advanced Studies in Education" in Naples, Florida, "In a deep sense, the choice of the name Walden emanated directly from Thoreau. We feel our institution has an environment within which we are partially shielded from the negative impacts of social forces, within which we can elicit the best which is within us."

Point Park College in Pittsburgh Pa., has issued a large poster entitled "A Thoreau Education" filled with quotations from Thoreau. And the experimental Franconia College in Franconia, N. H., heads its advertising with "I prefer to finish my education at a different school"--Henry David Thoreau.

Princeton University Press, in advertising their forthcoming edition of Thoreau's REFORM PAPERS has issued a news release entitled "Thoreau on Watergate" with pertinent quotations from the book.

According to the San Francisco EXAMINER for July 24, 1973, Tim Graveson, a young Marin artist, "wanted to do a Thoreau number," and so built a house and studio thirty feet off the ground in a tree where he has lived and painted for the past year.

Louse Island in the East Branch of the Penobscot River in Maine has officially had its name changed by the Maine state legislature to Thoreau Island!

The August, 1973, issue of SKY & TELESOCPE features a color cover photograph of "Moon & Planets over Walden Pond."

Raymond Tripp's book on Thoreau, WITH PEN OF TRUTH, reviewed in the Fall, 1972, Bulletin, may be obtained from the Society for New Language Study, P. O. Box 10596, Denver, Col., 80210 for \$3.20.

PEGASUS DESCENDED: A BOOK OF THE BEST BAD VERSE, edited by Camp, Kennedy and Waldrop (MacMillan, 1971) includes Thoreau's "My Boots" as a choice example of bad verse (p. 139).

It was announced recently on a New Orleans TV show that Walden Pond had been completely covered over by a housing project! Many things have happened to Walden, but not that--yet.

A cartoon by Sullivan in the Worcester Telegram for August 1, 1973, shows the Allagash Wilderness jammed with campers & a super-highway and one canoeist wedged among others saying, "I don't really think this is what Thoreau had in mind."

A recent ad for Holloway House stuffed green peppers boasts that they are cooked "to a different drummer." An ad in the Boston papers says, "Poor Thoreau. He couldn't live in the Walden Square Apartments in Cambridge. But you can. For just \$158 a month," and an ad in Arizona newspapers says, "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation...Not at McCormick Ranch...Instead, you'll find an invigorating world of things you love...golf, sailing, riding, bicycling." Perhaps we should burn all the copies of Walden on Madison Avenue.

Rumors have it that the door to Concord's jail where Thoreau was incarcerated has just been found.

A June, 1973, release of the comic strip "Funky Winkerbean" says of Funky, "While the rest of us are leading lived of quiet desperation, he's leading one of noisy desperation."

Friends of Earth have recently released a new Thoreau poster entitled "The world has visibly been recreated."